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High School Preparation for College English

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WHEN your chairman wrote me about addressing you at this meeting, she suggested that I might like to give you "some thoughts on high school English teaching that have grown from your experience as a teacher in a junior college." Now it just happens that I've had a vast number of such thoughts. But they cover so large a field, and are, sometimes, so overlaid with what I may call the *emotion* of teaching, that I think I'll confine myself to a few remarks on one phase of the matter. I shall simply ask and then attempt to answer a single question: What has a teacher of college English a right to expect of a freshman who has graduated from an accredited high school?

Probably the first step towards an intelligent (or even an intelligent) answer is to try to tell you quite frankly just what sort of student we think we are now receiving—just what kind of material we are being asked to go to work on.

There was a time—not too long ago; I'm sure you can remember it—when the ordinary child in an American school passed serenely from grade to grade right on through high school. Each teacher at each level could be certain that the students she met in September had been reasonably well-trained up to a certain point or they would not have been turned over to her. Now, it is quite otherwise—so much otherwise that at times one wonders whether the original function of the school as a place of learning—a

EDITOR'S NOTE: This paper was presented at the annual luncheon meeting of the Illinois Association of Teachers of English, held in Urbana, October 25, 1947.

place where a growing mind develops the power to master his racial inheritance as it comes to him through books—is not becoming entirely lost. Certainly at the present time the well-meaning efforts of “educators” (in quotes; I don’t mean teachers) are largely concerned with seeing that Johnnie does not get an “inferiority complex” or, worse, develop a “block.” I don’t know how valuable all this is; personally I fear that protecting Johnnie from a very easily removable “block” by passing him into the sixth grade when he has not mastered the work of the fifth (and, subsequently, presenting him with a diploma which he has not earned) is bad business. I feel that Johnnie so treated runs the risk of being “blocked” in a very real sense when he later fails to get a job because he cannot write a decent letter. Repeating the fifth grade would have hurt him very little (I wonder how much we ourselves are responsible for the idea that a child is a social outcast if he has to repeat a grade); failing to get the position may hurt a great deal. My opinions are, of course, only those of a classroom teacher; still, I suppose, I may surmise. And about one thing I do not need to surmise. I *know* that students now come to college much more poorly equipped in the basic skills than they used to be, and I am sure that teachers of English—grade school, high school and college—are not wasting their time when they stop to consider the condition.

May I, then, remind you of our aims, about which, by this time, we can be very glib; we can simply say that the teaching of English at any level demands attempts

1. To develop, in the student, facility in what we technically call the “basic skills” and
2. To teach the student to use these skills, directly, as a means of self-expression, and, indirectly, for the purpose of mastering other college subjects and as a means of general mental expansion.

By the first, as applies to teaching English in the junior college, we simply mean that, in college, we expect the student to write a greater number of themes, longer, and more mature in outlook, than he wrote in high school. And it is exactly at this point that we say to you, “But surely we cannot get this result unless the student comes to us with a real mastery of some of the basic principles.” We think we have a right to expect the student to be able to spell *simple* words, to have proper standards of neatness in the preparation of manuscript, and to know a *little* grammar. Let me be as definite as I can.

Upon the subject of spelling, of course, we need not stop long. There are many good lists; your own BULLETIN offers, I believe, a very good one.¹ About spelling in general, I must say that never have I seen such poor spelling as is now appearing in my themes. Students misspell the names of the days of the week, the months of the year, the states of the Union, the names, indeed, of the very streets on which they live! There is a kind of epidemic of *indifference* to spelling; students seem to feel that it doesn't matter how they spell, and when I ask such a one how he expects to master the heavy mathematics attendant upon engineering if he cannot learn to spell simple words, he looks positively startled. Yet, in spite of all this evidence to the contrary, I cannot help thinking spelling important. To me, successful spelling is merely the outgrowth of careful and unremitting attention; isn't the whole power to learn based on that very thing?

In the matter of vocabulary I should be quite satisfied if entering students could use the dictionary intelligently. At present, students seem to feel that the power to read diacritical marks and even the devices of accentuation are quite beyond them; etymology is a branch of esoteric learning.

As to punctuation, I do not see why any person who has studied English for twelve years should not know how to punctuate the simpler sentences. Why shouldn't written interrogations be followed by question marks? Why shouldn't commas be inserted in a series? Isn't the semicolon even seen in high school text books? And what, for that matter, is so difficult about learning to write the direct quotation?

It is not, however, of these things—spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation—that I need to speak. Even what I have said, brief though it was, I need not have said because you knew it already; you knew it before I said it. It is of grammar you would like me to speak—grammar—that mysterious subject, that most difficult of all branches of knowledge, that horrible (and unreasonable) barrier to the success of the engineer and the pre-medic. How much grammar ought a high school student know when he comes to college? How much should he know of the structure of the only language in which he ever will, very likely, speak a word or write a line? To this question let me dare to make a firm, clear, categorical answer.

¹ Potthoff, E. F., "An Analysis of Spelling Lists," ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN, November, 1942.

First, a knowledge of the eight parts of speech and the ability to identify them in simple sentences.

Second, a working knowledge of the irregular verbs.

Third, a realization of the difference between the transitive and the intransitive verb, between the direct object and the subjective complement.

Fourth, a knowledge of the fundamental parts of a sentence, the subject and the verb, with or without appropriate complements.

Fifth, a rudimentary knowledge of the principle of agreement between subject and verb.

Sixth, an ability to distinguish between word, phrase, and clause.

If the college freshman had these to begin with, I'm sure he could get on very well with us. Are such demands unreasonable? I cannot see that they are; in fact, unless the high school student knows this much about grammar, I do not see that he can use his language intelligently at all. He is and has been reading and writing English by ear, and that is not effective any more than it is for a musician—no matter how talented—to play the piano by ear. Sometimes I go so far as to think that *unless* the student learns these things—particularly the irregular verbs and the power to distinguish between the transitive and intransitive verb, in the grades or high school, he can never be taught them at all. No amount of college training can make up for the omission of these things in a child's education.

All this may sound as if I were blaming the high school teacher and, over her shoulder, the grade school teacher. Not at all. Let me say right here that of all the martyrs to causes, the patient, long-suffering holders-of-lines, I consider the modern classroom teacher to be the most heroic. There *was* a time when a teacher was simply set to instruct a group of children. She was probably inadequately trained (at least to begin with); her school room was incredibly bare, not to say ugly (unless she spent her own time and money beautifying it); she was expected to get along with the very least equipment possible. But she *was* encouraged to develop and uphold standards; she *was* encouraged to improve her own methodology; she *was* encouraged by her superior officers and the general public to become a *good teacher*. And when she had done that she was let alone in her class room. She was the ruler there; few indeed were the times she was interrupted in her

work, much less interfered with. She was asked for results and her personal integrity was respected when and while she got them.

Now it is quite different. The "educator," the Ph.D. in education, has taken over. He has never spent a day in the class room, alone, facing forty pairs of eyes, the brains behind which know instinctively every single device which may be applied to the end of *not* learning anything and *not* becoming trained into social beings. No, he has never faced a room full of children. Nor does he intend to. His function is to stay warily outside the class room and tell the teacher therein how wrong she has been all these years. Do not mistake me! I do not say and I do not mean to imply that advanced training for teachers is undesirable. I merely say that the young holder of an advanced degree in education should realize that such an attainment is only the beginning of his career—not its culmination.

Yes, there is still the school room. There stands the teacher; there sit the children; no matter how many books are written, how many statistics are compiled or curves are drawn, the problem is the same. The teacher must teach! Only *now* she must not *seem* to teach. She must teach invisibly, almost imperceptibly.

She must not come right out barefacedly and teach spelling; such a process has become practically indecent; she must teach it functionally—that is to say, incidentally; she must suppose that the child confronted by good spelling in written English will spell correctly—a viciously nonsensical idea if ever there were one. No one living, in any book, paper, or magazine, ever sees *to* or *too* confused; yet the child learning to write will make this error continually.

All the teacher's effort then must be bent on making everything easy for the child. Games, plays, visual devices—the child must be *tricked* into learning; he must never be encouraged—or even allowed—to study at all.

Of course these devices are legitimate in the earlier grades; we all know of the great humanizing influences which began to reform the school room in the early nineteenth century and we all agree that such reforms were necessary and welcome. But school cannot forever be conducted like play. Somewhere along the line there must be awakened in the child the will to learn. At some time or other his mental equipment must cease to run on the starter and must pick up real power. Of course some children seem born with the will to learn; some get it from the home; but most children must get it at school—I should say at about the sixth grade. From

then on, learning must come to be seen for what it is, a stern and demanding business. Is this too realistic a view? Can we not dare to admit that *usually* the true source of the failure of the teaching process is that the student does not bring the will to learn? How can even a grown man be taught anything if he does not want to learn?

This condition, however, is not the worst handicap under which the modern teacher suffers. She has another—the difficulty of maintaining standards. For the new educator's central teaching is that never under any circumstances must the student be allowed to become discouraged. In some schools students are actually graded on effort, not performance. Johnnie gets an E if he "tries hard." I ask you, how can such a little hot-house plant ever bear the stiff winds of college education or of adult life?

All this puts the classroom teacher "on the spot." Even if she knew how and wanted to, she wouldn't dare offend modern educational theory, her superior officers, and the public which now frowns upon "home work"—though Heaven only knows why; you would think that parents, in the absence of "chores" would welcome something that would develop a little sense of responsibility in the child. She wouldn't dare teach right out, holding each child to his task. Yet, when her pupils finally get to college, how the cruel winds of adverse criticism whistle around her ears! Loudly even the students bleat, "Why wasn't I taught grammar? Why wasn't I made to write themes?"

No, never let me be heard adversely criticizing any teacher, grade school or high school. But when I see grown men confusing *weather* and *whether* and writing *supprise*, *labatory* and *sumpting*, may I be allowed to wonder: could it be the lack of oral reading? When I see such absolutely reckless punctuation, may I suggest dictation exercises? Ought not college teachers be permitted to call back to the grade school teacher and the high school teacher—and even attempt to make themselves heard by the administration. If I could do that, I'd say

1. *Return to oral reading*—even if it means a return to a rule of never more than thirty to a class room.
2. *Return to dictation*, given often and made *progressively difficult*.
3. *Insist upon daily writing* even if it means again that a teacher should handle only as many children as she can really teach.

4. *Abandon the objective test except* as a review device. Checking answers does not teach the child to *write*. It is of no value to save a child's time. A child has a great deal of time—more than he'll ever have again. He is in school not to save time, but to use it to good advantage. Just as the only way to learn to swim is to swim, so the only way to learn to write is to write—copy, compose, study words—write, and write again—under intelligent and unremitting supervision.
5. *Above all, tighten standards.* Children like firm standards; they like to know where they are. They don't mind hard work—if all is honest and fair. Stop grading on a curve. It may be of interest to a child's parents that he compares well with other children, but the only thing that matters to the child himself is how well he has mastered his material. Moreover, only through development of interest in the honest performance of his task can the child hope to develop what I called the "will to learn."

All this I would say to the grade school teacher and to the grade school principal and to any Board of Education that happened to be really interested in children. And it brings me right to the heart of the matter.

What the freshman must have if he is to succeed in college English is a certain "power of attack." The freshman of today, in general, has *little* "power of attack." He sits back supinely, looking at us with only a mild interest and wondering (again, mildly) what sort of show we are going to put on in order to coax him to learn. He's willing to be amused; he's agreeable, even pleasant. But he hasn't the slightest notion of studying—and shockingly small ability to study even if he wants to. He has been amused until he's entirely bored. He's had too much radio, too much movie, too much visual education; to ask such a spoiled darling to get right down and dig the thought from the printed page is quite, quite too much. And as for writing, the skimpiest, most erratically composed and atrociously penned theme will have to do. The teacher ought to be gratified because the student "tried."

How this condition is to be remedied, I do not know. Perhaps it is characteristic of the age in which we live and is not to be remedied by any means whatsoever. But it is hard for me to believe that. It is hard for me to believe that the simple remedy I suggest would not go far. Return the teacher, I say, to the school room, better trained than she used to be—well grounded in sound theory

and tested methodology. Let her rule there, unhampered by theoretical meddling, firmly supported by her administration and the general public. But there again! After all, who am I? Just a classroom teacher.

All this, now, has had to do with skills. Yet I sometimes resent it very much when I am told that I teach *merely* a "skill." I'll admit I'm teaching a skill—but is that all? When a gym teacher teaches a boy to swim, is he teaching *only* a skill? Is he not, rather, *mostly* helping the boy to a stronger physique and a steadier nervous system? Likewise, when I am teaching the boy to express himself, am I not teaching him to arrange his thoughts, marshal his ideas? And when he has so done, has he not toned up his whole intellect? Consider what happens when *you* sit down to write. You have ideas; you put them down. All is vague, disorderly. But now a plan appears; you arrange your ideas. Now a better plan appears; you rearrange. You compel your fuzzy notions into a train of thought; you channelize your consciousness. In a word, you assert your dominance, and as you do so, you taste mastery. What a heady draft is that! What a breath of success, that immeasurable triumph of compelling the vague into the clear, the intangible into the perfectly apparent! Such, in a measure, is the crown of the successful theme. A page of prose expressing what the student has to say—that is success, success after a struggle, a success which enlivens the student, stirs him, makes him see his own possibilities. He learns to respect the writing of others, studies the forms of writing—description, exposition, and the rest—and learns how to handle each. His mind expands, his intellect toughens; he becomes mature, manly!

Sometimes I think (and if I did not so think, I fear I couldn't continue, so discouraging are the signs of the times) that teaching a young American to write his own language, to express his thoughts in an orderly way is the only means in the world of teaching him to think, to be a true citizen of a republic, a reasonable human creature, heir to all the ages (bright and dark) and capable of carrying on the pursuit of knowledge and supporting the burden of the known. At any rate, I am certain that I am not teaching *only* a skill when I am teaching English. I am a teacher of the most valuable course in the curriculum, the key to all the others, the key to intellectual power and progress—English composition. If I had my life to live over, and a choice of work to do, I should do exactly as I have done. Nowhere in the world could I have served humanity better!

Errors Most Frequently Checked in Early Freshman Compositions

By W. G. JOHNSON and E. G. MATHEWS

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THE INVESTIGATION reported here is an attempt to discover which weaknesses in the fundamentals (grammar, diction, coherence, mechanics, punctuation, and spelling) are most common among freshmen when they enter the University of Illinois. We reason that if we concentrate on these weaknesses in Rhetoric 1, we shall not only give our students the help they need in the fundamentals, but will also have more time to help them develop the ability to write exposition.

As material for our investigation, we selected the first five expositions written by the 147 students in 8 of the 47 sections of Rhetoric 1 in the fall semester of 1943-4. Actually only 699 of the 735 themes written in the 8 sections were available in the files. We believed that the writing of 147 (slightly more than fifteen per cent of the 950 students enrolled in the course) would give us a fair sampling. We believed, moreover, that if we considered only the first five expositions, we could be relatively certain that the assignments in the handbook and the class consideration of the topics under discussion would affect only slightly our view of the freshmen's needs in fundamentals.

The first five expositions were written during the first six weeks of the semester:

Second week: Theme 1, a single, well-developed paragraph.

Third week: Theme 2, a paragraph.

Fourth week: Theme 3, a paragraph.

Fifth week: Theme 4, from three to five related paragraphs.

Sixth week: Theme 5, an impromptu, from three to five related paragraphs.

During the six weeks, the students covered the following assignments in handbook material:

Third week: The sentence fragment.

Fourth week: Sentence sense; adjective-adverb confusion; the parts of speech; phrases and clauses.

Fifth week: Comma fault; semicolon; case; agreement.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This report was first published in the ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN for May 1944 and proved so popular that the issue was soon exhausted. We bring it back into print as a companion piece to Miss Christ's lively paper.

These assignments undoubtedly lowered the total of some of our figures for errors in the semicolon and in grammar. Concentration on these assignments may account, at least partly, for the relatively low figures for some other items such as abbreviations and recording of numbers, triteness, and upside-down subordination.

In the table below we have used the terms of the *Harbrace Handbook*, one of the textbooks used this year in Rhetoric 1. The items under each heading are listed in order of frequency. Our figures are based on a count of errors actually checked by instructors in the correction of student compositions.

	Number of students violating the rules	Number of violations	Percentage of students violating the rules
GRAMMAR			
1. Agreement in number.....	70	105	.48
EXAMPLE: Each of the seasons have their own fascination.			
2. Comma fault.....	52	97	.35
EXAMPLE: The city is full of such people, in fact, a native New Yorker is a rather rare thing.			
3. Incorrect tense or mood.....	43	69	.29
EXAMPLE: I learned what cuts and proofs were, and how they are used.			
4. Sentence fragment.....	40	56	.27
EXAMPLE: Times when I feel it would be pleasant and peaceful to do something simple, in a simple way.			
5. Wrong case.....	16	20	.11
EXAMPLE: Often he would quietly leave the room, letting my brother and I continue arguing.			
6. Adjective-adverb confusion.....	14	17	.10
EXAMPLE: The camp people also have a slightly superiority complex.			
MECHANICS			
1. Capitalization.....	73	219	.50
EXAMPLE: A few years ago I decided to make Home Economics my profession. I decided to study it at the university of Illinois.			
2. Italics.....	48	61	.33
EXAMPLES: There seems to be a magnetic power in the words ten-cent store. Have you read <i>Of Human Bondage</i> ?			

	<i>Number of students violating the rules</i>	<i>Number of violations</i>	<i>Percentage of students violating the rules</i>
3. Abbreviations and recording of numbers....	15	18	.10
EXAMPLE: I was 13 that winter. The summer of nineteen forty-three was one of the most useful periods of my life.			

PUNCTUATION

1. Commas to set off an interpolation.....	106	272	.72
EXAMPLE: The life right around home, on the whole is satisfying because it is well rounded.			
2. Comma in a compound sentence.....	82	188	.58
EXAMPLE: In most cases this is a mere formality for comfort is one thing that is lacking.			
3. Superfluous comma.....	75	170	.51
EXAMPLE: Then you'd have to argue with yourself, whether you should let him stay there or chase him back into the kitchen.			
4. Comma after a preceding dependent element.....	66	114	.49
EXAMPLE: If the occasion calls for a certain amount of technical knowledge he is able to join in intelligently.			
5. Hyphen in compounds.....	51	113	.35
EXAMPLE: Ours is a limitless playground, not a ten by twelve plot of gravel or cinders.			
6. Omission of apostrophe.....	51	79	.35
EXAMPLE: My mother, not trusting her offsprings ability to clean, cleans the living room, the dining room and the kitchen.			
7. Comma for clarity.....	49	92	.33
EXAMPLE: I had a chance to meet all kinds of interesting people among them commercial artists.			
8. Commas in a series.....	42	66	.29
EXAMPLE: I have found it very hard to work, go to school and follow the rules of the house at which I am staying.			
9. Use of quotation marks.....	37	59	.25
EXAMPLE: You have heard people say, A man's best friend is his horse.			

DICTION	Number of students violating the rules	Number of violations	Percentage of students violating the rules
1. Exactness..... EXAMPLE: By the classes we attend at the University, we gather the knowledge, the inspirations, and all <i>other</i> physical items which it takes to <i>understand</i> and live in the world.	140	734	.95
2. Wordiness..... EXAMPLE: He doesn't interfere with the studies of his <i>fellow roommate</i> , and he does not want his studies interfered with.	79	176	.54
3. Omission..... EXAMPLE: His students made an analysis of 158 political constitutions.	79	146	.54
4. Faulty idioms..... EXAMPLE: I blame my parents for my <i>ignorance</i> in the value of money.	38	60	.26
5. Triteness..... EXAMPLE: A gentleman farmer is what we call that man who having fought and won in the battle of human endeavor in the maelstrom of affairs, deciding to rest on his laurels, retires to the nether lands, and there begins a taste of that primeval satisfaction of pushing a little seed into the sweet earth tending and watering it, and from its fruits in due season, enjoying the products of the sweat of his brow.	26	34	.18
6. Repetition..... EXAMPLE: The two words to describe myself are very simple words, and these <i>two words</i> are: being dumb.	24	34	.16
COHERENCE			
1. Reference..... EXAMPLE: I always felt a deep sympathy for these students though I knew only their names; yet in each of these there was a moral behind the story.	87	155	.59
2. Shift in point of view..... EXAMPLES: This poor farmer becomes successful because he saved every penny that came to him. People interest me, and certainly history provides you with people of all types and classes.	68	121	.46
3. Pronounced incoherence or lack of logic..... EXAMPLES: For example, my home is	52	133	.35

	<i>Number of students violating the rules</i>	<i>Number of violations</i>	<i>Percentage of students violating the rules</i>
large enough so that a family of six have ample room and this ample room must be cleaned the same as the rest of the house. In this manner a basis is constructed which the student can follow as his progress into the subject deepens.			
4. Word order.....	44	66	.30
EXAMPLE: In the hospital, I was assigned a bed next to that of a very beautiful girl about my own age, who was named Grace.			
5. Excessive coordination.....	38	63	.26
EXAMPLE: There is much sorrow then, for it will be another year before we all get together again, but that is the way of life, so we bid farewell to our departing family and retire to the house for evening chores.			
6. Dangling modifiers.....	36	47	.24
EXAMPLE: By doing this, it seemed more like a game than hard work.			
7. Parallelism.....	36	46	.24
EXAMPLE: I imitate Smitty by leaning on the dust mop for several minutes, going about my housework very slowly, making beds the way she did, and did several other things.			
8. Upside-down subordination.....	5	5	.03
EXAMPLE: I tossed my books on a chair and began to mount the stairs when I heard a voice holler, "Pick those books up, girl!"			
SPELLING.....	127	703	.86

THE MISPELLINGS

The 605 different words misspelled in the Rhetoric 1 themes by 127 of the 147 students were checked against the list in Edward F. Potthoff's "An Analysis of Spelling Lists in College Rhetoric and Composition Textbooks."¹ This list includes the 2121 different words which occur in the spelling lists in twenty textbooks in use in college composition courses. Professor Potthoff records the number of times each word appears on these lists (e.g., *occurrence* appears on 14). The pertinent facts resulting from the check are these:

¹ ILLINOIS ENGLISH BULLETIN, Vol. 30, No. 2; November, 1942.

Of the 605 different words misspelled by the Rhetoric 1 students in the themes checked, 315 were included in the Potthoff composite list; 290 (of which only 18 were proper nouns) were not. It appears, therefore, that an instructor who used all twenty of the spelling lists and achieved perfection in using them would eliminate rather less than half of the errors in spelling.

Another check showed that 61 words of the 315 in Potthoff's list appeared in 10 or more of the textbooks. Of these, only 21 occurred in the themes of more than one instructor. Eight—*all right, argument, believe, definitely, its, there, too, and whose*—are the only ones which occurred in the themes of more than two instructors.

Expressed in terms of percentages of the total number of words misspelled, the abstractions of the last paragraph are yet more striking. Of the Rhetoric 1 total of 605, the 61 words appearing in more than 10 texts constitute slightly less than 10 per cent. The words in these lists are, of course, commonly misspelled, and some may think it worth the necessary class time to correct the relatively few students who misspell them. But it seems to the writers much wiser to make spelling, in the college course, an individual responsibility. The student might profitably learn the few practical rules of spelling; he should make a careful list of his own errors, and master the words involved. Perhaps more important, he should establish in his own mind whatever connection there is between pronunciation and spelling, and avoid the all-too-common habit of omitting an entire syllable, and such lawless spellings as *infintestimal, recognition, and visalization*, for *infinitesimal, recognition, and visualization*.

CONCLUSION

The investigation suggests that, if the primary purpose of college composition is to train the student to write effective exposition, we can pass over much handbook material, but not all. Every student needs to study the uses of the comma: 74 per cent of all the errors in punctuation recorded in the table above are errors in the use of the comma, and no student was innocent of such errors. One class hour devoted to the rules for the use of the comma, together with frequent reminders and special outside exercises for the worst offenders, seems a reasonable prescription. Such study might be expected to help eliminate the comma fault. To the other marks of punctuation little or no class time need be given. Careful correction of errors and an occasional conference should enable the student to overcome weakness in using them.

Lack of control over capitalization was so nearly universal a weakness that part of an hour should be given to an explanation of the principles of capitalization. And perhaps an hour should go to discussion of the causes of lack of agreement in number, with the student responsible for certain exercises. We have suggested above that spelling be made an individual responsibility.

Incoherence, since it is a sin against clarity, and a painfully common one, must engage us in a constant struggle. Handbook explanations can make the student aware of the types of incoherence—upside-down subordination, lack of parallel structure, the dangling modifier, excessive coordination, faulty word order, shifts in point of view, and faulty reference of pronouns. Exercises in the correction of such violations are pretty generally accepted as a means of sharpening the student's consciousness of such errors. But more vivid are examples taken from current themes.

Diction needs most attention of all. Since almost all of our students use words carelessly, the instructor must center attention on the significance of the word in context. Samples of erroneous diction, from current themes, written on the blackboard or put before the student on mimeographed sheets, would enable the instructor to combat the error of inexact diction. And the student's development of a more mature vocabulary can, we believe, be furthered by careful study of the diction in a book of essays or models.

The writers regard the proposed elimination of handbook material advisable for Rhetoric 1, necessary though it may be in high school. The student, we believe, will become familiar with the handbook by using it to correct the errors marked in his themes, and will learn to use it as a reference work. The instructor can, by careful consideration of his class, discover easily whether or not additional handbook study is needed by the whole group.

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DuPage: Mr. R. M. Leader, York Community High School, Elmhurst

Southern: Miss Alice Grant, Frankfort High School, West Frankfort

Eastern: Miss Addie Hochstrasser, Paris High School, Paris

Southwestern: Mr. Herbert Davis, Salem High School, Salem

South Central: Miss Mina M. Terry, Petersburg High School, Petersburg

Central: Miss Marcella Whetsler, Lincoln Community High School, Lincoln

Mississippi Valley: Mrs. Harold Wells, Rushville Community High School, Rushville

Southeastern: Miss Hila Stone, Robinson High School, Robinson

East Central: Mrs. Eleanor Anderson, Danville High School, Danville

Western: Miss Isabel Hoover, Western Academy, Macomb

Illinois Valley: Mrs. Ethel Bugbee, LaSalle-Peru Township High School, LaSalle

Lake Shore: Miss Evadine Keating, Thornton Township High School, Harvey

Northeastern: Miss Gladys Turner, East Aurora High School, Aurora

Chicago: Miss Alice C. Baum, Austin High School, Chicago

Chicago Parochial: Sister Mary Evelyn, Mercy High School, Chicago